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United States  
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# Major News Releases and Speeches

January 9-January 16, 1981

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
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COMM. T. CENTRAL RECORDS

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
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# Speeches

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U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Governmental and Public Affairs

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## **Remarks by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland during the release of the summary report of the Structure of Agriculture Project, Jan. 13, 1981.**

Good morning. I called this news conference to release the summary report of the Structure of Agriculture Project I began almost two years ago and to answer questions about the report.

As many of you know, I think this project is the most important internal activity we have undertaken in the last four years here. Because of the election results, however, this report is neither as comprehensive nor as conclusive as we would have liked. There was simply not enough time to complete some of the more complicated research work.

Nevertheless, this report is still an important beginning step toward an agricultural policy more in tune with today's realities and the desires of the American people. It identifies current problems and those likely to arise in the immediate future. Close attention to its findings will allow policy-makers to anticipate developments they must address, rather than continue to act in an atmosphere of crisis, after the fact.

I believe this report will significantly advance the understanding of modern agriculture in the United States and what it might be like in the years ahead. It presents facts, answers some questions and raises others, and suggests various courses to pursue. The ultimate solutions, of course, will be a product of the full political process. Too much interest has been generated in the subjects and problems addressed here for this report to simply gather dust.

Later this week, the reports of the National Agricultural Lands Study-- a joint undertaking of USDA and the Council on Environmental Quality--will be released, with important new information for you on the status of our farm and ranch lands. Also coming out in the weeks and months ahead will be the update on the inventory of our agricultural resources under the Resource Conservation Act and many of the technical research papers on which this summary and our judgments were based.

(2) I know you're under time pressures, but I urge you to read this document carefully and the technical reports as they are published. The subject is a complicated one and requires close attention.

The Structure Project was undertaken, in part, because we wanted to find out, as a new decade began, exactly where the department's programs were taking American agriculture in the 1980's. Although this was not all we were looking at, it was a central question, because of a number of fundamental changes in the environment in which farmers produce our food, feed, and fiber.

One of these basic changes is that agriculture is no longer--if it ever was--an isolated part of the economy whose problems could be addressed separately without consideration of the influences of other forces on farming and the effects of the farm economy on the rest of the society. The connections among the various parts of the U.S. economy and the various parts of the world have become so much broader and so much more direct that it no longer makes sense to think about our agriculture that way.

Here at home, more people want a greater say in the shaping of food and agricultural policies, and their interests are legitimate. Internationally, demand for our food and feed is strong today and we expect it to continue to be strong into the foreseeable future. For the first time in history, our agricultural plant is operating at or very near its immediate capacity, as a result of a wide range of international and domestic developments during the seventies. Our base of resources and technology is fully stretched. Despite a series of bumper grain crops, the margin between surplus and scarcity is thin. Temporary shortages are a distinct possibility, and markedly higher prices are probable. These forces will exert considerable pressures not only on agriculture but on the nature and direction of agricultural policy.

This does *not* mean we should plant fence row to fence row again. It means we must come up with carefully thought-out methods of anticipating problems, so that we can cope almost routinely with this tightening world balance--rather than rush to confront some crisis and not have time to worry about the side-effects.

(3) The details of these changes in the agricultural environment are given in Part I of the report. But, as you'll see in the introduction to this document, what we tried to do was to view this environment and

these changes in yet a larger context--that of the beliefs and values of the American people, the goals they believe agricultural policy should encourage in the operation of the food system. Long traditions support these objectives--nutritional well-being, a reasonable level of farm income, efficiency, equity, opportunity, resiliency, conservation, and freedom of choice, or independence. A final goal is consistency between agricultural policy and other national policies.

We tried to look at this future of higher prices and tighter supplies through the screen of these goals, to see whether they would be served by the present structure and the trends that are underway. Except for the assurance of reasonable incomes for most farmers, we concluded that these goals would be frustrated.

That conclusion obviously led to the further conclusion that the choices to be faced by policymakers and the public in the next few years will be as complicated as they will be crucial.

Many, if not most, of our major farm programs were conceived during times when American farmers were far more alike in their problems, needs, and ambitions than they are today, times when concentrating on the level of earnings from the farm operations made more sense. This assumption of great similarities has been carried through most of the fine-tuning of those programs over the years. But, as you will see throughout the report, American agriculture today is far too diverse for one type of single-issue, broad-brush policy to meet the needs of all our farmers.

For example, the farm economy and the rural economy are no longer essentially the same thing. Less than 700 counties--mainly in the Great Plains and Corn Belt--are now dependent on agriculture for more than 20 percent of local income, compared with more than 2,000 just 30 years ago. This means that the Government can no longer expect to help solve rural problems simply (4) by concentrating on farm problems or difficulties among the growers of a specific commodity. Most of our farmers are now more dependent on off-farm income than on the earnings from their farm operations. This new breed of part-time farmer is neither trying to get out of farming after learning some other skill nor trying to get into farming in a bigger way. These farmers, like most of their rural neighbors, now rise and fall with the tides of the national economy far more than with the year-to-year



changes in the farm economy.

Our farmers range from 370 firms with average sales of more than \$23 million a year, to a million or so with only a few thousand dollars in farm income, but enough off-farm earnings to bring the family above the national median income of about \$18,000 a year.

We ended up dividing the farm population into four categories to try to arrive at some way of approaching real problems instead of outdated myths. This breakdown is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 and the final section of the report. Basically, we have one group whose problems primarily involve finding markets; they have little farm income but substantial off-farm earnings. A second group, what we call the small farms, depends on a combination of farm and nonfarm earnings to secure an adequate income, and even then sometimes it's tough. We suspect that the farmers still below the poverty line are in this group. Consequently, a combination of types of programs is necessary, perhaps in packages geared to different regions or commodities.

Then we have the medium-sized farms, those with sales from \$40,000 to \$200,000 and farm incomes probably less than a fifth of that. Our studies found that, by the time sales reach the upper half of this range, all of the economies of size have been captured. But it is this middle group that still has most of what we think of as the traditional problems of farming--getting the operation to the point where it is not only efficient but also secure. This group generates about 42 percent of the sales of farm products each year.

Finally, we have the large farms, those with sales of \$200,000 or more a year, which bring in about 39 percent of the sales. These people, and certain of (5) those in the intermediate group, simply do not have an income problem in the way we have thought of income problems in farming for decades--that is, either absolutely too little income or much less than other kinds of businesses were earning in the rest of the economy. But the large farmers are extremely vulnerable to instability in the market, because their farms operate so close to the margin. Just a small disruption in their cash flow can put them in a tailspin, because their operations are highly debtleveraged and dependent on production inputs from off the farm itself. We find nothing to be gained for the larger society in continuing to enhance with taxpayers' money the incomes of the fully efficient farmers



through credit and income subsidies. A properly tailored grain reserve program should secure for these larger producers the economic stability necessary for their survival.

As you can see from just that quick review, the situation today calls for careful tailoring of programs to different problems. Taking one national average, trying to help one kind of farmer, and hoping that most of the rest get some benefit from that, without getting hurt, just won't solve anything.

At the same time, all the testimony we gathered through public meetings for this project and a special Harris poll conducted in 1979 told us that the American people, farmers and nonfarmers, want an agricultural system that truly works for a large number of modest-sized farms. They want a system that is fair to all, that is flexible enough to meet unanticipated problems, that is open to a new generation, and that still continues to supply us with nutritious food in abundance.

Are our programs adequate to this task? Our conclusion, simply put, is, "no." We found that even the programs that were designed to protect the farm sector accelerated and continue to reinforce trends that push families out of farming, keep new farmers out, and concentrate control of the resources that produce our food into the hands of fewer persons.

Regardless of the intent, for example, the tax code encourages and rewards farm growth far beyond that needed for full efficiency. The rewards (6) do not necessarily go to the operators, the farmers. Instead they go primarily to the landowners, to investors. Some of these investors are farmers, that's true. But the tax code, the commodity and credit programs, the persistent inflation in our economy, increases in land prices out of all proportion to the returns from farming that land, and a number of other strong forces are all working toward greater separation between those who own the resources used in farming and those who farm.

That separation is a basic structural change for agriculture.

The "family farm" is a phrase nearly everyone can and does use, and trying to define it for use as a policy tool is like stepping into quicksand. But there is something behind that phrase that is very important. On a family farm, the functions of ownership, management, and labor are all tied together in the same hands, or at least related hands. What we see happening in our agriculture today--the agriculture

that has been my life, all my life--is that a whole range of different, unrelated persons and firms are increasing their control over one or more of those functions. That means more decisions are being made off the farm, and not necessarily with the same motivations that the farm operator has.

The crucial fact is that half our farm and ranch land is owned by less than two-tenths of one percent of the population. In 1974, 37 percent of that farm and ranch land was farmed by someone other than the owner, and the proportion could well be greater today.

Continuing existing policies and programs without the tailored adjustments called for by today's realities will almost certainly mean that those present structural trends will continue. There will be a continued growth in farm sizes, further declines in farm numbers, greater economic vulnerability among the larger producers, and mounting abuse of resources.

If we are going to maintain diversity, flexibility, and opportunity in American agriculture, we need to devise an agricultural and food policy and agricultural programs that break the spiral that only promotes ever-higher land prices and ever-larger farms.

(7) We find no gains for society, no public interest, in continuing policies that force families out of farming, whatever their size and ambitions. We need, in other words, an agricultural policy that, for the first time, reflects a full awareness of structural trends and concerns and not just the big national totals and averages.

However, the approaches we recommend on the financial and marketing sides will mean nothing unless serious measures are undertaken soon to safeguard the basic resources--the soil, the water, and the sources of fuel. This means not only more responsible farming practices in the vulnerable areas but also careful thought about the side-effects of national policies that reward short-term advantages more than long-term productivity.

These are powerful forces at work, and this is only the start of the debate over the choices and courses available. Our recommended adjustments, if adopted, are unlikely to reverse the trends, but we believe they could slow the drive toward greater concentration and greater rigidity in our food system and then provide a greater chance of realizing all our national goals.

Government policies are not the only forces at work. But they are important influences, and they are among the few that can be realistically controlled. Failure to act at a time when it is still possible to choose will amount to a decision to accept the status quo and what that portends for the future of the American way of farming.

Thank you. My staff and I will be happy to answer your questions.

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# Press Releases

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## **GRAZING FEES TO GO DOWN ON WESTERN NATIONAL FORESTS; UP ON NATIONAL GRASSLANDS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9--Fees for grazing livestock will go down on national forests and up on national grasslands in the West this year, Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland announced today.

In total, farmers and ranchers will pay about \$18 million in 1981 to graze livestock on these lands, \$4 million less than they did last year.

Bergland said the grazing fees on national forests in 16 western states will be \$2.31 per animal unit month, a decrease of 10 cents from the 1980 average fee of \$2.41. An animal unit month is grazing for one month by one bull, cow or horse or five sheep or goats.

The 16 states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The fee decrease is a result of livestock production costs exceeding selling prices in 1980, Bergland said. A formula specified in the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 is used to determine the fee.

The formula considers the difference between total costs of public and private grazing, the value of forage, beef cattle prices and the price ranchers pay for items such as fencing, transportation, and veterinary services for producing cattle. The act limits the amount the fee can increase or decrease in any single year to 25 percent of the previous year's fee.

The same process is used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of the U.S. Department of the Interior to determine fees for grazing on most lands administered by that agency in the western United States. For the first time since the law was passed, the national forests and the BLM-administered lands in the West will have a uniform fee of \$2.31 per unit month, Bergland said.

By USDA regulation, the fee formula also is used to figure grazing fees for national grasslands administered by the Forest Service in the nine Great Plains states of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas and Wyoming.

As a result of higher forage values and beef cattle price indexes in these states, average fees for grazing on national grasslands in 1981 will increase 11 cents from their 1980 level to \$3.62 per animal unit month, Bergland said.

Twenty-five percent of the net receipts paid for grazing livestock on national forest system lands are returned to the states for use in the counties where the lands are located.

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# Press Releases

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## PLAN WITH CARE FOR WINTER FUN IN FORESTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9--Before you venture into the forests to enjoy the fun and beauty of winter in the wilds, as more and more people are doing these days, be sure you know how to cope with the dangers you may encounter.

This advice comes from John Leasure, recreation specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service.

Above all, he urges, *PLAN AHEAD!*

"Don't let the hazards of the cold season scare you out of the back country, but do learn about the problems you'll face there and give them considerable thought. Careful pre-trip planning is important any time you visit the forests, especially in the cold season," said Leasure. "Try to avoid hazards and know how to handle trouble when it comes."

Forest Service officials predict a 23 percent increase in winter sports in the 154 national forests over the next 10 years--twice the expected increase in sports for other times of the year. Part of reason, they say, is the growing popularity of the back country in the winter time.

"Whether you're going by foot or on horseback, snowshoes, skis or snowmobile, you should consider several factors when planning a day or overnight trip," said Leasure.

Here's his checklist:

--Never go alone. Four is the best number in a party. That way, if someone is hurt, two people can stay with the victim while the third goes for help.

--Make sure the people in your party have about the same abilities. This helps avoid one person leading another into a situation he or she can't handle, such as a steep, snow-covered hillside.

--Know how to use a map and a compass. Deep snow may cover the signs marking your route, so you might have to find your way on your own.

--Ask local officials what conditions to expect in the area you're visiting. Tell them your planned route and when you expect to return. Don't forget to notify them when you get back, so they'll know you're out safely. Describe the conditions you encountered. They can pass the



information on to hikers planning a similar trip.

--Check the weather forecast for the period you expect to be out, bearing in mind that unexpected storms may come up. Prepare accordingly.

--Since you're at the mercy of the weather, don't try to stick to a tight travel schedule. Allow for the possibility you'll be snowed in for two or three days."

--If bad weather does strike, you'll need the right kinds of gear, food and clothing to survive. Take a tent designed for winter conditions, along with a sleeping bag rated for warmth at the lowest temperatures you expect, plus a safety margin of 10-15 degrees. Put a foam pad under your bag to insulate you from the cold ground.

--When deciding what gear to take, keep the total weight down. Resist the temptation to "load up." Too much weight can wear you out. But don't try to save weight by skimping on food. Take plenty, along with a backpack stove and sufficient fuel. If you get snowed in, you'll be glad you did.

--Take high-energy food, and keep it easily available. Plan your meals so they can be prepared under severe conditions. And remember that it's easy to become dehydrated in winter, so take plenty of soups and keep water handy.

--Wear wool. It retains body heat, even when wet, as do some synthetic fibers. See to it that the outer layer of your clothing sheds water because heat from your body will melt falling snow. Locate clothes in your pack to make it easy to add and shed layers to maintain an even body temperature while active and resting.

--Bear in mind that if your body temperature falls too low, you're a prime candidate for hypothermia, the number one killer of outdoor recreationists. It's caused by exposure to cold and aggravated by wetness, wind and exhaustion. Ask members of your party to watch each other for symptoms such as sluggishness, weaving, slurring of speech and uncontrollable fits of shivering.

--If anyone starts to show symptoms of hypothermia, don't try to push on to your destination. Stop. Warm the victim up with dry clothes, hot soup and high calorie foods. In serious cases, get the person into a sleeping bag and warm body contact.



--Watch for avalanches. Learn the local conditions that might cause them. Avoid wide, open slopes and gullies. To help locate and rescue anyone who gets buried by an avalanche, each person should trail brightly colored cords behind them or carry electronic location beacons, as well as probes and shovels.

--Respect the land. Take out what you take in. Litter you leave hidden in the snow shows up in the spring. Don't leave human wastes near water courses. Bury them in the soil if you can dig through the snow cover.

You can get more facts about recreational opportunities in the 187 million acres of national forests across the country at any office of the USDA's Forest Service.

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# Press Releases

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## **USDA ANNOUNCES \$300 MILLION IN SAVINGS IN CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 12--Recent legislative changes will reduce U.S. Department of Agriculture outlays for food programs for children in schools and child care centers by more than \$300 million this fiscal year--1981, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman said today.

Under the Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1980, some reductions will be effective only in the current fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30, while others are permanent changes in child nutrition programs, Foreman said.

The changes apply to the school lunch and school breakfast programs; the special milk program; the summer food program; and meals served in child care centers. All are administered by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service.

The changes:

--Reduce commodity assistance for school lunches by 2 cents per meal in fiscal year 1981 only. This will result in a savings of \$70.8 million.

--Prohibit the Labor Department's Job Corps Centers from participating in the school lunch or breakfast programs. This is a permanent change and will save \$15.2 million this year.

--Eliminate the Jan. 1 semi-annual cost of living adjustment in federal reimbursement rates for breakfasts and lunches served in schools and meals served in child care centers in fiscal year 1981 only. The next adjustment will be made July 1. It will be based on changes in the Consumer Price Index for the previous 12 months rather than the previous six months, as in the past. This provision will result in a savings of \$70.5 million.

--Reduce the federal reimbursement for all school lunches by 2.5 cents, except school lunches served in school districts where 60 percent or more of the children of low income families and received free or reduced price lunches during the 1978-79 school year. This provision only applies to fiscal year 1981 and will result in a \$56.9 million

savings.

--Makes permanent an existing provision for reducing the reimbursement for a half pint of milk from 8.5 to 5 cents. This provision applies in schools and institutions participating in the special milk program and one or more other programs such as the school lunch, school breakfast, child care or the summer food program. This is a permanent cut and will provide a savings of \$57.4 million this fiscal year.

--Lower USDA's reimbursement for reduced price lunches to 20 cents less than the reimbursement for free lunches. In the past, states could receive 10 cents less for reduced price meals than they received for free meals. This permanent cut will provide a savings of \$28.4 million this fiscal year.

--Reduce the reimbursement rate for supplemental foods served in child care centers by 3 cents per meal. This permanent reduction will result in a \$4.1 million savings this year.

"Regulations changing the way eligibility standards are determined for free and reduced price meals for fiscal year 1981 will be announced soon," Foreman said. "The present deductions for unusually high medical or shelter costs, disaster or casualty losses and other hardship conditions will be replaced with one standard deduction. USDA's poverty income adjustment update for free and reduced price lunches will also be eliminated. This will save \$22.6 million in fiscal year 1981.

"A regulation limiting meal service in the summer food service program to two meals per day, except in camps and service institutions serving meals primarily to migrant children, will also be announced later," she said. "This will be a permanent change and should save \$18 million in fiscal year 1981."

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# Press Releases

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## **NINETEEN ADDITIONAL CROPS TO BE COVERED BY "ALL-RISK" FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14--Nineteen additional crops in 307 counties in 30 states are now eligible for federal "all-risk" crop insurance, according to Everett Sharp, acting manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Crop Insurance corporation.

Sharp said the additional crops covered are almonds, barley, corn, cotton, dry beans, grain sorghum, grapes, oats, peanuts, peas, potatoes, rice, rye, soybeans, sunflowers, sweet corn, tobacco, tomatoes, and wheat.

Sharp said these crops are grown in counties where crop insurance presently operates and are in addition to the 250 new-county crop insurance expansion previously announced. The new programs are part of USDA's plan to expand to all crops in all counties.

"Most of the announced expansion into new barley, oats, rye and wheat crops is for the 1982 crop year," Sharp said, "because the planting period for winter crops already is past."

"Both expansion programs," he adds, "will permit some 19.4 million additional acres to become eligible for crop insurance protection during the 1981 spring and 1982 winter growing seasons. Additional counties and crops will be announced for the 1982 crop year at a later date."

"We are doing our best to improve and expand our programs in time to offset the loss of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service's low-yield disaster program which expires after the 1981 crop year," Sharp said.

"Additional benefits to FCIC insured growers this year include a 30 percent premium subsidy up to 65 percent level of coverage, revised price elections for valuing production, and the opportunity to exclude hail and fire insurance coverage from the "all-risk" policy for premium credit in favor of private coverage for these risks," Sharp said.

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# Press Releases

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## **LIGHT WINTER SNOWFALL IN WEST MAY CAUSE SUMMER WATER SHORTAGES**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 15--Light snowfall and a smaller-than-normal snowpack in several areas of the West may lead to inadequate water supplies later in the year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration reported today.

Norman A. Berg, chief of USDA's Soil Conservation Service, said his agency's first snowpack surveys of the season indicate that dry fall weather and poor to very poor snowpack may result in below normal runoff for a large area of the West.

He said the upper portion of the Columbia basin in Canada has the best snowpack in the region, up to 125 percent of normal.

However, Berg said, the Columbia River is expected to flow at 97 percent of its average rate. Most tributaries in the United States will contribute less than normal water amounts of water. Some water supply shortages may develop in the southern and western sections of the basin.

As 1981 began, the Southwest had very poor snowpack. In Arizona, the meager early-season snowpack has gradually melted away during an unusually dry and warm winter. Runoff in the major rivers in the Southwest is forecast to be about 50 percent of normal.

Elsewhere in the West, most snowpack so far is 70 percent of normal or less, Berg said. Runoff forecasts are for 60 to 85 percent of normal in most of the region.

Reservoir storage generally is good and should help avert major water supply deficiencies. But water users in areas of low runoff who depend on direct diversion may face mid- and late-season shortages.

The USDA agency surveys snowpack and monitors snowmelt at about 1,600 sites throughout the West and Alaska each month from January through May. USDA specialists, in cooperation with the National Weather Service of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, analyze the data and issue monthly forecasts of runoff and water supplies.



information on to hikers planning a similar trip.

--Check the weather forecast for the period you expect to be out, bearing in mind that unexpected storms may come up. Prepare accordingly.

--Since you're at the mercy of the weather, don't try to stick to a tight travel schedule. Allow for the possibility you'll be snowed in for two or three days."

--If bad weather does strike, you'll need the right kinds of gear, food and clothing to survive. Take a tent designed for winter conditions, along with a sleeping bag rated for warmth at the lowest temperatures you expect, plus a safety margin of 10-15 degrees. Put a foam pad under your bag to insulate you from the cold ground.

--When deciding what gear to take, keep the total weight down. Resist the temptation to "load up." Too much weight can wear you out. But don't try to save weight by skimping on food. Take plenty, along with a backpack stove and sufficient fuel. If you get snowed in, you'll be glad you did.

--Take high-energy food, and keep it easily available. Plan your meals so they can be prepared under severe conditions. And remember that it's easy to become dehydrated in winter, so take plenty of soups and keep water handy.

--Wear wool. It retains body heat, even when wet, as do some synthetic fibers. See to it that the outer layer of your clothing sheds water because heat from your body will melt falling snow. Locate clothes in your pack to make it easy to add and shed layers to maintain an even body temperature while active and resting.

--Bear in mind that if your body temperature falls too low, you're a prime candidate for hypothermia, the number one killer of outdoor recreationists. It's caused by exposure to cold and aggravated by wetness, wind and exhaustion. Ask members of your party to watch each other for symptoms such as sluggishness, weaving, slurring of speech and uncontrollable fits of shivering.

--If anyone starts to show symptoms of hypothermia, don't try to push on to your destination. Stop. Warm the victim up with dry clothes, hot soup and high calorie foods. In serious cases, get the person into a sleeping bag and warm body contact.

Snow accumulated during winter and spring provides about 75 percent of the western water supply during the year.

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# Press Releases

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## USDA GIVES TIPS ON HOW TO HANDLE RISING FOOD COSTS

HYATTSVILLE, Md., Jan. 15--With the cost of eating going up, you may wish to get the most for your nutrition dollar by using one of four food-buying plans from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

One of the plans--called "thrifty," "low-cost," "moderate-cost" and "liberal"--probably fits your needs.

Each of the plans offer guides for estimating a family's food needs and costs. They are used by teachers, home economists and others who help people plan nutritious and satisfying meals for the money they can spend, say USDA home economists.

Specialists keep track of food costs at the USDA's Consumer Nutrition Center of the Science and Education Administration here.

Under the "thrifty" plan, least expensive of the four, the cost of feeding a family of four at home for a week went up 40 cents to \$54.20 between October and November. Such a family had elementary school children. If your children are pre-schoolers, the price was lower.

This continued the upward trend dating back many months.

Feeding the same family a week under the "liberal" plan--most lavish of the four--cost \$104.80 in November, up from \$104.10 in October.

The thrifty plan contains less milk, meat, vegetables and fruit and more legumes, cereal, flour and bread than the other plans. Families on a low-cost plan usually need to select the lower cost foods within food groups, such as choosing ground beef rather than steak or bread instead of fancy rolls.

Here are the costs of eating at home for a week for people in different circumstances during November, 1980:

	Thrifty Plan	Low-Cost Plan	Moderate-Cost Plan	Liberal Plan
FAMILIES				
Young couple	\$31.80	41.20	\$51.80	\$62.00
Elderly couple	28.60	36.70	45.40	54.30
Family of 4 with preschool children	44.90	57.70	72.00	86.30
Family of 4 with elementary school children	54.20	69.70	87.50	104.80
INDIVIDUALS*				
Females				
12-19 years of age	13.40	17.00	21.00	25.10
20-54 years	13.00	16.80	20.90	24.90
55 years and over	11.80	15.10	18.60	22.10
Males				
12-14 years of age	15.00	19.00	23.80	28.50
15-19 years	16.50	21.10	26.40	31.70
20-54 years	15.90	20.70	26.20	31.50
55 years and over	14.20	18.30	22.70	27.30
Children				
1-2 years of age	7.20	9.20	11.30	13.50
3-5 years	8.80	11.00	13.60	16.40
6-8 years	11.20	14.30	17.90	21.50
9-11 years	14.10	17.90	22.50	26.90

\*You can figure out the price of feeding a family of any size by adding up the costs for each member of the family as follows:

--For those eating all meals at home (or carrying some meals from home), use the amounts shown.

--For those eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent from the amount in the table for each meal not eaten at home. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent or one-fourth the cost shown.

--For guests, include for each meal eaten, 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group.

Next, adjust the total figure if more or fewer than 4 people generally eat at the family table. Costs shown are for individuals in 4-person families. Adjustment is necessary because larger families tend to buy and use foods more economically than smaller ones.

Thus, for a 1-person family, add 20 percent; for 2 persons, add 10 percent; 3, add 5 percent; 4, use as is; 5 or 6, subtract 5 percent; 7 or more, subtract 10 percent.

Each of the food plans contains food to provide a nutritious diet for the individual or family specified, say the USDA home economists. The plans reflect buying practices of families who spend different amounts of money for food. For example, the thrifty plan (used in setting the coupon allotment in the food stamp program) is for families with little money for food.

Other plans are for people with bigger food budgets.

For details on how the plans are calculated, write to the Consumer Nutrition Center, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

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